

Biography:

STONEY EDWARDS

Country singer Stoney Edwards is a man born to cloudy skies but looking ahead to rainbows. Born on a farm in Seminole, Oklahoma, Stoney was one of five boys and two girls. His parents separated when he was a kid and left him to be the family breadwinner. He fished, hunted, trapped, picked potatoes and peanuts and, withal, knew hunger many days of his life.

One thing that always sustained him was his love of music. As a youngster, he remembers crouching in front of a radio avidly listening to Bob Wills, whom he worshipped. He learned all of Wills' songs and vowed to play and sing with his group one day. So he taught himself to play, taking an empty gallon bucket and stretching window-screen wires across it, painstakingly making music, until he could get hold of a real guitar.

Stoney washed dishes, drove a truck, did janitor work, anything, as long as it brought in enough for an occasional meal and gave him time to practise his music. He came to California in the mid-fifties, met a girl named Rosemary, married her and had three kids. He saw to it that they ate regularly too, no matter what job he held down.

Then came a terrible set-back. He was operating a crane on a loading dock where, unknown to him, carbon dioxide was in use. Over a period of time, Stoney developed carbon dioxide poisoning, which attacked his body and mind. He found he couldn't even remember Rosemary's name! It took him a full year to recover, just

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long enough for the fates to hand him another vicious slap. Working in the Richmond, California, shipyards, he was cleaning out a ship's oil storage tank when a dock-hand lit the escaping oil fumes to burn them away, with Stoney trapped inside the tank! When they got him out, he was badly injured and no longer able to do any heavy labor.

Recuperation found him on welfare and unsure of tomorrow. Everybody told him to go back to music, but Stoney couldn't believe anyone would pay to hear a country boy laborer with no education play and sing. But friends and family kept urging him to try out in public, so Stoney took his courage into his hands, and voice, and sang in a couple of bars. The audiences went wild. Encouraged, Stoney gratefully accepted an offer to play a benefit date for Bob Wills with members of the Wills group, his old idols. The audience loved him again, and singing that date made Stoney prouder than anything.

In the audience at that concert was a man named Ray Sweeney, a well-known manager and newspaper publisher. Sweeney instantly offered Stoney a contract, but Stoney still felt insecure and unsure. Then Rosemary spoke up after the silent years of hardship and told him that now was the time to put all his tunes in one basket and take the plunge. Which he did, to family and friends' cheers, and audiences' too.

Capitol Records caught up with Stoney before too long. They listened, told him he was definitely a fine professional performer

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(country boy laborer with no education or not) and snapped him up as a recording star.

It takes a man a hardship or two to mature. The hardship in Stoney Edwards' life should make him just about the most mature man on the planet, and with his open warmth and quiet wisdom, maybe he is. Capitol also thinks that his great voice and talent should see to it now that the hardship way is over and the glory road is at his feet.

-- Mark Stern

- CAPITOL -

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